

Remarks

The Office Action mailed November 22, 2004 has been carefully reviewed and the following remarks have been submitted in consequence thereof.

Claims 1-8, 10-43, and 45-67 are pending in this application. Claims 1-8, 10-43, and 45-67 stand rejected. Claims 9 and 44 have been cancelled.

In accordance with 37 C.F.R. 1.136(a), a one-month extension of time request is submitted herewith to extend the due date of the response to the Office Action dated November 22, 2004, for the above-identified patent application, from February 22, 2005, through and including March 22, 2005. Authorization to charge Deposit Account No. 01-2384 in the amount of \$120.00 to cover this extension of time request is also submitted herewith.

The rejection of Claims 1, 34, and 66 under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as being directed to non-statutory subject matter is respectfully traversed.

The Office Action asserts at page 2 that "Claims 1, 34 and 66 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention lacks patentable utility". Applicants respectfully traverse this assertion and this rejection. However, Applicants have amended Claims 1, 34 and 66. Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 1, 34 and 66, as amended, recite a useful process within the "the technological arts". Moreover, these claims include a computer system configured to perform certain steps of the process. Accordingly, Claims 1, 34 and 66 as amended satisfy Section 101.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 101 rejection of Claims 1, 34 and 66 be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claims 1-4, 6-7, 12-15, 21-22, 33-36, 39-42, 47-49, and 64-67 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thompson et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,810,401) ("Thompson"), James G. Squyres, *A Quick Peak According to Graham and Dodd*, Journal of Financial Statement Analysis, Fall 1998 ("Squyres") and Huang et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,151,582) ("Huang") is respectfully traversed.

Applicants respectfully submit that no combination of the cited references describe or suggest the claimed invention. As discussed below, at least one of the differences between the cited references and the present invention is that none of the cited references describe or suggest a method for providing a value of a good to a requester using a local computer coupled to a database and in communication with a remote computer wherein the remote computer is controlled by an analyst, and wherein the method includes designating the request for the value of the good as an exception request if the local computer determines that the corresponding good does not have a policy value assigned to the good. (Emphasis added.)

As explained below, Thompson does not teach designating a request for the value of a good as an exception request if it is determined that the corresponding good does not have a policy value assigned to it. Rather, Thompson merely describes a system that allows a user to enter custom values for dimensional attributes such as unit dimension width, and unit dimension height. These custom values are then used to configure the product and calculate a cost for the product. Applicants submit that merely describing a system that allows a user to enter custom values for dimensional attributes such that the system can configure and cost the product does not teach designating a request for the value of a good as an exception request if it is determined that the corresponding good does not have a policy value assigned to it and, thus, cannot be valued without additional information and research.

Moreover, Applicants submit that none of the cited references describe or suggest a method that includes displaying a web page indicating that the request has been designated by the local computer as an exception request and prompting the requester to provide additional information relating to the good, and prompting the requester to transmit the entered data and the additional information to the remote computer controlled by the analyst.

As explained below, none of the references teach displaying a web page indicating that the request has been designated as an exception request and prompting the requester to provide additional information relating to the good. Rather, in Thompson, in the case where the user enters custom values for dimension attributes, the system merely costs the product based on the information initially submitted. The system does not display a web page indicating that the

request has been designated as an exception request, and does not prompt the requester to provide additional information relating to the good. Moreover, none of the references teach prompting the requester to transmit the entered data and the additional information to a remote computer controlled by an analyst.

Furthermore, none of the cited references describe or suggest a method that includes researching by the analyst the value of the good including analyzing data external to the database based on the entered data and the additional information, and calculating the value of the good based on the research performed by the analyst.

Additionally, none of the cited references describe or suggest a method that includes analyzing trends among a plurality of similar exception requests wherein the exception request analysis is performed by the local computer, and prompting the analyst to enter using the remote computer at least one new policy value and corresponding data for a good based on the exception request analysis wherein the prompting is performed by transmitting a message from the local computer to the remote computer after performing an exception request analysis.

As explained below, although Huang mentions analyzing trends in quantity and percentage to characterize the demand for products, Huang does not describe or suggest analyzing trends among a plurality of similar exception requests, and prompting an analyst to enter at least one new policy value and corresponding data for a good based on the exception request analysis.

Applicants also submit that Squyres and Huang are non-analogous art that are not relevant to the present patent application. More specifically, Squyres generally describes an analytical process designed to give investment professionals a Graham and Dodd perspective of the business performance of a company relative to its competitors. Squyres does not address issues related to a method for providing a value of a good to a requester wherein the goods are non-stationary assets including at least one of equipment, a product, a truck, an automobile and a vehicle. Applicants submit that analyzing the business performance of a company is significantly different than calculating the value of a good such as a piece of equipment, a product, a truck, an automobile or a vehicle.

In addition, Huang describes a decision support system for managing a supply chain. Huang does not address issues related to a method for providing a value of a good to a requester wherein the goods are non-stationary assets including at least one of equipment, a product, a truck, an automobile and a vehicle.

Given the obvious differences between (i) a process for analyzing the business performance of a company, (ii) a system for managing a supply chain, and (iii) a method for providing a value of a good to a requester wherein the goods are non-stationary assets include at least one of equipment, a product, a truck, an automobile and a vehicle, and the fact that the process described by Squyres and the system described in Huang neither recognizes nor solves any of the problems addressed by the present invention, it is respectfully submitted that Squyres and Huang are non-analogous art that would not be looked to for potential solutions in providing a value of a good to a requester wherein the goods are non-stationary assets including at least one of equipment, a product, a truck, an automobile and a vehicle.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that the present claims are patentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang.

Thompson describes an automated configuration system for facilitating the configuration of desired products, services, or other assemblages that require users to gather and assimilate disparate knowledge of makes, models, types, features, codes, and prices of the desired product/service to be configured. The configuration is facilitated through interaction of a user with a frame engine that performs frame-based inferences to discern stored knowledge of a product (or the like), as supplemented by a rules-based inference system.

For example, a user of the Thompson system starts at the beginning of a question list, the first of which may present the user with a certain product type, such as a window or a door. As questions are answered by the user, other questions that no longer apply are automatically removed from the list. In some cases, answering questions will actually add new questions to the list or will automatically answer other questions. The questions relate to a typical product configuration. If the user selects "window," the configuration system directs questions to develop answers pertinent to window configurations only. Once the user has answered all of the

questions, the system is able to configure the product and calculate a cost for the configured product.

Squyres is an article that generally describes “an analytical process designed to give investment professionals a Graham and Dodd perspective of the business performance of a company relative to its competitors – quickly and graphically.” The articles further provides that the “Graham and Dodd’s *Security Analysis* (1988) has so established the guidelines for investment analysis that no other effort to codify the process has replaced it.”

Huang describes a decision support system for managing an agile supply chain including a server side and a client side. The server side includes a decision support system database that interfaces with a model engine that performs analysis of the data to support planning decisions. The server side also includes a server manager that coordinates requests for service and information. The client side includes decision frames that present the various view points available in the system to the users. A frame manager coordinates the requests from the decision support frames to access the needed data and models.

Claim 1 recites a method for providing a value of a good to a requester using a local computer coupled to a database and in communication with a remote computer, the remote computer controlled by an analyst, the method includes “storing in the database data relating to a plurality of goods including a description of each good, wherein each good includes a non-stationary asset including at least one of equipment, a product, a truck, an automobile and a vehicle...assigning a policy value to at least one good stored in the database...entering data into the local computer including a request for a value of a good and data relating to the good, the local computer configured as a calculator for calculating a value of the good...using the local computer to determine whether the value of the good can be calculated based on the entered data including determining whether the good has a policy value assigned thereto...designating the request for the value of the good as an exception request if the local computer determines that the corresponding good does not have a policy value assigned to the good...displaying a web page indicating that the request has been designated by the local computer as an exception request and prompting the requester to provide additional information relating to the good...prompting the

requester to transmit the entered data and the additional information to the remote computer controlled by the analyst...researching by the analyst the value of the good including analyzing data external to the database based on the entered data and the additional information...calculating the value of the good based on the research performed by the analyst...analyzing trends among a plurality of similar exception requests, the exception request analysis performed by the local computer...prompting the analyst to enter using the remote computer at least one new policy value and corresponding data for a good based on the exception request analysis, the prompting is performed by transmitting a message from the local computer to the remote computer after performing an exception request analysis...and displaying the value of the good on the local computer for the requester.”

None of Thompson, Squyres or Huang, considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest a method as recited in Claim 1. More specifically, no combination of Thompson, Squyres or Huang describe or suggest a method for providing a value of a good to a requester using a local computer coupled to a database and in communication with a remote computer wherein the remote computer is controlled by an analyst, and wherein the method includes designating the request for the value of the good as an exception request if the local computer determines that the corresponding good does not have a policy value assigned to the good. (Emphasis added.)

Thompson does not teach designating a request for the value of a good as an exception request if it is determined that the corresponding good does not have a policy value assigned to it. Rather, Thompson merely describes at Col. 10, lines 39-51 a system that allows a user to enter custom values for dimensional attributes such as unit dimension width, and unit dimension height. These custom values are then used to configure the product and calculate a cost for the product. Applicants submit that merely describing a system that allows a user to enter custom values for dimensional attributes such that the system can configure and cost the product does not teach designating a request for the value of a good as an exception request if it is determined that the corresponding good does not have a policy value assigned to it and, thus, cannot be valued without additional information and research.

Moreover, no combination of Thompson, Squyres or Huang describe or suggest a method that includes displaying a web page indicating that the request has been designated by the local computer as an exception request and prompting the requester to provide additional information relating to the good, and prompting the requester to transmit the entered data and the additional information to the remote computer controlled by the analyst.

More specifically, no combination of Thompson, Squyres, or Huang teach displaying a web page indicating that the request has been designated as an exception request and prompting the requester to provide additional information relating to the good. Rather, in Thompson, in the case where the user enters custom values for dimension attributes, the system merely costs the product based on the information initially submitted. The system does not display a web page indicating that the request has been designated as an exception request, and does not prompt the requester to provide additional information relating to the good. Moreover, none of the references teach prompting the requester to transmit the entered data and the additional information to a remote computer controlled by an analyst.

Furthermore, no combination of Thompson, Squyres, or Huang describe or suggest a method that includes researching by the analyst the value of the good including analyzing data external to the database based on the entered data and the additional information, and calculating the value of the good based on the research performed by the analyst.

Additionally, no combination of Thompson, Squyres or Huang describe or suggest a method that includes analyzing trends among a plurality of similar exception requests wherein the exception request analysis is performed by the local computer, and prompting the analyst to enter using the remote computer at least one new policy value and corresponding data for a good based on the exception request analysis wherein the prompting is performed by transmitting a message from the local computer to the remote computer after performing an exception request analysis.

Although Huang mentions at Col. 40, lines 38-55 analyzing trends in quantity and percentage to characterize the demand for products, Huang does not describe or suggest analyzing trends among a plurality of similar exception requests, and prompting an analyst to

enter at least one new policy value and corresponding data for a good based on the exception request analysis. More specifically, Huang describes a supply chain management system that analyzes industry survey data to characterize the demand for products including an analysis of the trends in quantity and percentage of each product family over a given period of time of the time series (Col. 40, lines 38-48). Huang does not describe or suggest analyzing trends among a plurality of similar exception requests, and prompting an analyst to enter at least one new policy value and corresponding data for a good based on the exception request analysis as recited in Claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 1 is patentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 1 is patentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang.

Claims 2-4, 6-7, 12-15, 21-22 and 33 depend, directly or indirectly, from independent Claim 1 which is submitted to be in condition for allowance. When the recitations of Claims 2-4, 6-7, 12-15, 21-22 and 33 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 2-4, 6-7, 12-15, 21-22 and 33 are also patentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang.

Claim 34 recites a system for providing a value of a good to a requester, the system includes a first computer associated with a requester, a second computer associated with an analyst, a database for storing data relating to a plurality of goods including a description of each good and whether a policy value has been assigned to the good wherein each good includes a non-stationary asset including at least one of equipment, a product, a truck, an automobile and a vehicle, and a server coupled to the database and configured to read input data including a request for a value of the good and data relating to the good, the server further configured to “determine whether the value of the good can be calculated based on the inputted data including determining whether the good has a policy value assigned thereto...designate the request for the value of the good as an exception request if determined that the good does not have a policy value assigned thereto...transmit data to be displayed as a first web page on said first computer indicating that the request has been designated as an exception request and prompting the

requester to provide additional information relating to the good...prompting the requester to transmit the inputted data and the additional information from the first computer...automatically transmitting data to be displayed as a second web page on said second computer notifying the analyst that the request has been designated as an exception request and prompting the analyst to research the value of the good using the inputted data, the additional information and data external to the database...calculate the value of the good based on the research performed by the analyst...analyze trends among a plurality of similar exception requests...and prompting the analyst to enter at least one new policy value and corresponding data for a good based on the exception request analysis, the new policy value is transmitted from the second computer...a network connecting said server to said first computer and said second computer...and a user interface in communication with the first computer for allowing the requester to input data relating to a request for the value of the good and data relating to the good and for receiving the value of the good output.”

Claim 34, as herein amended, recites a system for providing a value of a good to a requester comprising, among other things, a first computer associated with a requester, a second computer associated with an analyst, and a server configured to perform a method essentially similar to that of Claim 1. Thus, it is submitted that Claim 34 is patentable over the combination of Thompson, Squyres and Huang for reasons that correspond to those given with respect to Claim 1.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 34 is patentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang.

Claims 35-36, 39-42, 47-49, and 64-65 depend, directly or indirectly, from independent Claim 34 which is submitted to be in condition for allowance. When the recitations of Claims 35-36, 39-42, 47-49, and 64-65 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 34, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 35-36, 39-42, 47-49, and 64-65 are also patentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang.

Claim 66 recites a method for providing a value of a good to a requester using a local computer coupled to a database and in communication with a remote computer, the remote

computer controlled by an analyst, the method includes “storing in the database data relating to a plurality of goods including a description of each good including at least one of a type, a manufacturer, a model, a quantity, and options, wherein each good includes a non-stationary asset including at least one of equipment, a product, a truck, an automobile and a vehicle...assigning a policy value to at least one good stored in the database...entering data into the local computer including a request for a value of a good and data relating to the good, the local computer configured as a calculator...using the local computer to determine whether the value of the good can be calculated based on the entered data including determining whether the good has a policy value assigned thereto...calculating the value of the good if the value can be calculated based on the entered data...designating the request for the value of the good as an exception request if the local computer determines that the good does not have a policy value assigned thereto and the value cannot be calculated based on the uploaded data...displaying a web page on the local computer indicating that the request has been designated as an exception request and prompting the requester to provide additional information relating to the good...prompting the requester to transmit from the local computer the entered data and the additional information to the remote computer controlled by the analyst...researching by the analyst the value of the good including analyzing data external to the database based on the entered data and the additional information...calculating the value of the good based on the research performed by the analyst...analyzing trends among a plurality of similar exception requests, the exception request analysis performed by the local computer...and prompting the analyst to enter using the remote computer at least one new policy value and corresponding data for a good based on the exception request analysis, the prompting is performed by transmitting a message from the local computer to the remote computer after performing an exception request analysis.”

Claim 66, as herein amended, recites a method for providing a value of a good to a requester using a local computer coupled to a database and in communication with a remote computer controlled by an analyst. The method includes steps similar to those recited in Claim 1. Thus, it is submitted that Claim 66 is patentable over the combination of Thompson, Squyres and Huang for reasons that correspond to those given with respect to Claim 1.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 66 is patentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang.

Claim 67 recites a method for providing a value of a good to a requester using a local computer coupled to a database and in communication with a remote computer, the remote computer controlled by an analyst, the method includes “uploading to the local computer data relating to a request for a value of a good and data relating to the good, the local computer configured as a calculator for calculating a value of the good, data relating to a good including at least one of a type, a manufacturer, a model, a quantity, and options, wherein each good includes a non-stationary asset including at least one of equipment, a product, a truck, an automobile and a vehicle...recognizing the request for the value of the good as an exception request if no response is provided by the local computer to the request for the value of the good and prompting the requester to provide additional information relating to the good...prompting the requester to transmit from the local computer the entered data and the additional information to the remote computer controlled by the analyst...researching by the analyst the value of the good including analyzing data external to the database based on the uploaded data and the additional information...calculating the value of the good based on the research performed by the analyst...analyzing trends among similar exception requests, the exception request analysis performed by the local computer...and inputting using the remote computer a new policy value and corresponding data for a good based on the exception request analysis to facilitate subsequent valuations of similar goods.”

Claim 67, as herein amended, recites a method for providing a value of a good to a requester using a local computer coupled to a database and in communication with a remote computer controlled by an analyst. The method includes steps similar to those recited in Claims 1 and 66. Thus, it is submitted that Claim 67 is patentable over the combination of Thompson, Squyres and Huang for reasons that correspond to those given with respect to Claims 1 and 66.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 67 is patentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang.

Applicants also submit that Squyres and Huang are non-analogous art that are not relevant to the present patent application. More specifically, Squyres generally describes an analytical process designed to give investment professionals a Graham and Dodd perspective of the business performance of a company relative to its competitors. Squyres does not address issues related to a method for providing a value of a good to a requester wherein the goods are non-stationary assets including at least one of equipment, a product, a truck, an automobile and a vehicle. Applicants submit that analyzing the business performance of a company is significantly different than calculating the value of a good such as a piece of equipment, a product, a truck, an automobile or a vehicle.

In addition, Huang describes a decision support system for managing a supply chain. Huang does not address issues related to a method for providing a value of a good to a requester wherein the goods are non-stationary assets including at least one of equipment, a product, a truck, an automobile and a vehicle.

Given the obvious differences between (i) a process for analyzing the business performance of a company, (ii) a system for managing a supply chain, and (iii) a method for providing a value of a good to a requester wherein the goods are non-stationary assets include at least one of equipment, a product, a truck, an automobile and a vehicle, and the fact that the process described by Squyres and the system described in Huang neither recognizes nor solves any of the problems addressed by the present invention, it is respectfully submitted that Squyres and Huang are non-analogous art that would not be looked to for potential solutions in providing a value of a good to a requester wherein the goods are non-stationary assets including at least one of equipment, a product, a truck, an automobile and a vehicle.

Applicants further traverse the rejection of Claims 1-4, 6-7, 12-15, 21-22, 33-36, 39-42, 47-49, and 64-67 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang on the grounds that these Section 103 rejections are improper rejections. Obviousness cannot be established by merely suggesting that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify Thompson using the teachings of Squyres and Huang. More specifically, as is well established, obviousness cannot be established by combining the teachings

of the cited art to produce the claimed invention, absent some teaching, suggestion, or incentive supporting the combination. None of Thompson, Squyres or Huang, alone or in combination, describe or suggest the claimed combination. Furthermore, in contrast to the assertion within the Office Action, Applicants respectfully submit that it would not be obvious to one skilled in the art to combine these references because there is no motivation to combine the references suggested in the art. Rather, the Examiner has not pointed to any prior art that teaches or suggests to combine the disclosures, other than Applicants' own teaching.

As the Federal Circuit has recognized, obviousness is not established merely by combining references having different individual elements of pending claims. Ex parte Levensgood, 28 U.S.P.Q.2d 1300 (Bd. Pat. App. & Inter. 1993). MPEP 2143.01. Rather, there must be some suggestion, outside of Applicants' disclosure, in the prior art to combine such references, and a reasonable expectation of success must be both found in the prior art, and not based on Applicants' disclosure. In re Vaeck, 20 U.S.P.Q.2d 1436 (Fed. Cir. 1991). In the present case, neither a suggestion or motivation to combine the prior art disclosures, nor any reasonable expectation of success has been shown.

Furthermore, it is impermissible to use the claimed invention as an instruction manual or "template" to piece together the teachings of the cited art so that the claimed invention is rendered obvious. Specifically, one cannot use hindsight reconstruction to pick and choose among isolated disclosures in the art to deprecate the claimed invention. Further, it is impermissible to pick and choose from any one reference only so much of it as will support a given position, to the exclusion of other parts necessary to the full appreciation of what such reference fairly suggests to one of ordinary skill in the art. The present Section 103 rejection is based on a combination of teachings selected from multiple patents in an attempt to arrive at the claimed invention. Since there is no teaching nor suggestion in the cited art for the claimed combination, the Section 103 rejection appears to be based on a hindsight reconstruction in which isolated disclosures have been picked and chosen in an attempt to deprecate the present invention. Of course, such a combination is impermissible, and for this reason alone, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 103 rejection be withdrawn.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 103 rejection of Claims 1-4, 6-7, 12-15, 21-22, 33-36, 39-42, 47-49, and 64-67 be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claims 5, 16, 26-28, 38, 50-52 and 57 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Whitworth (U.S. Patent No. 6,622,129) is respectfully traversed.

Thompson, Squyres and Huang are all described above. Whitworth describes a method of creating an index of residual values for leased assets, transferring residual value risk, and creating lease securitizations. The index of residual values includes valuation information pertaining to different types of vehicles, different models and submodels of vehicles, different combinations of vehicle options, and different vehicle model years. The residual value index is updated with subsequent valuations of the leased assets and is employed to facilitate the transfer of residual value risk and create lease securitizations via mechanisms such as residual value futures, options, bonds and insurance products.

Claims 5, 16, and 26-28 depend from independent Claim 1. Claim 1 is recited hereinabove.

None of Thompson, Squyres, Huang or Whitworth, considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest a method as recited in Claim 1. More specifically, Whitworth does not describe or suggest a method for providing a value of a good to a requester as recited in amended Claim 1. Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 1 is patentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Whitworth.

When the recitations of Claims 5, 16 and 26-28 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 5, 16 and 26-28 are also patentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Whitworth.

Claims 38, 50-52 and 57 depend from independent Claim 34. Claim 34 is recited hereinabove.

None of Thompson, Squyres, Huang or Whitworth, considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest a system as recited in Claim 34. More specifically, Whitworth does not describe or suggest a system for providing a value of a good to a requester as recited in amended Claim 34. Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 34 is patentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Whitworth.

When the recitations of Claims 38, 50-52 and 57 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 34, Applicants submit that Claims 38, 50-52 and 57 are also patentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Whitworth.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection of Claims 5, 16, 26-28, 38, 50-52 and 57 be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claims 17, 30-32 and 58-60 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Quinn (U.S. Patent No. 6,360,222) is respectfully traversed.

Thompson, Squyres and Huang are all described above. Quinn describes a method of and system for organizing entries of an information directory based on relationships or "connections" between the users, and for adding new directory entries to the information directory without intervention by a system administrator. Each connection between entries is created with a "relationship type" describing the connection. New entries are created by existing users who have existing entries in the information directory. An existing user is allowed to access and modify contents of his own directory entry. The existing user may then submit a new user profile to the information directory system to create a new entry for the new user. When an existing user submits the profile for a new user, the information is stored in a relationship list within the existing user's entry. When the existing user's entry is accessed, the profile of the existing user and his relationship list will be displayed. Users can display connections of a specific relationship type.

Claims 17 and 30-32 depend from independent Claim 1. Claim 1 is recited hereinabove.

None of Thompson, Squyres, Huang or Quinn, considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest a method as recited in Claim 1. More specifically, Quinn does not describe or suggest a method for providing a value of a good to a requester as recited in amended Claim 1. Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 1 is patentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Quinn.

When the recitations of Claims 17 and 30-32 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 17 and 30-32 are also patentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Quinn.

Claims 58-60 depend from independent Claim 34. Claim 34 is recited hereinabove.

None of Thompson, Squyres, Huang or Quinn, considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest a system as recited in Claim 34. More specifically, Quinn does not describe or suggest a system for providing a value of a good to a requester as recited in amended Claim 34. Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 34 is patentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Quinn.

When the recitations of Claims 58-60 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 34, Applicants submit that Claims 58-60 are also patentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Quinn.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection of Claims 17, 30-32 and 58-60 be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claims 18 and 61 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Hartnett (U.S. Patent No. 6,064,971) is respectfully traversed.

Thompson, Squyres and Huang are all described above. Hartnett describes a method to operate a computerized adaptive knowledge base. The contents and organization of the adaptive knowledge base evolve based on the contributions and evaluations of a user community. Whether a particular set of contents or an alternative organization is preserved for future

iterations is a function of user evaluations, taking into account the amounts of information and the relative importance of content (i.e., organization). Items of the adaptive knowledge base which are as yet unevaluated by a particular user are ranked by estimating that user's evaluations, based on other items for which evaluations are available to compare with other users.

Claim 18 depends from independent Claim 1. Claim 1 is recited hereinabove.

None of Thompson, Squyres, Huang or Hartnett, considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest a method as recited in Claim 1. More specifically, Hartnett does not describe or suggest a method for providing a value of a good to a requester as recited in amended Claim 1. Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 1 is patentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Hartnett.

When the recitations of Claim 18 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Applicants submit that dependent Claim 18 is also patentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Hartnett.

Claim 61 depends from independent Claim 34. Claim 34 is recited hereinabove.

None of Thompson, Squyres, Huang or Hartnett, considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest a system as recited in Claim 34. More specifically, Hartnett does not describe or suggest a system for providing a value of a good to a requester as recited in amended Claim 34. Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 34 is patentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Hartnett.

When the recitations of Claim 61 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 34, Applicants submit that Claim 61 is also patentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Hartnett.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection of Claims 18 and 61 be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claims 19-20, 23-25, 54-56 and 62-63 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Ma et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,347,313) ("Ma") is respectfully traversed.

Thompson, Squyres and Huang are all described above. Ma describes a method and system for indexing and retrieving database objects, such as images, that includes a database manager which initializes database objects based on vectors for values of quantified features associated with the database objects. Similar database objects are grouped into common clusters that are based on system-perceived relationships among the objects. For each search session, a vector for a search query is calculated and database objects from the closest cluster within a feature space are selected for presentation at a user device. The user indicates which of the selected objects are relevant to the search session and which of the objects are irrelevant. If one of the clusters includes both relevant and irrelevant objects, the cluster is split into two clusters, so that one of the resulting clusters includes the relevant objects and the other cluster includes irrelevant objects. The correlation matrix is updated to indicate that the resulting clusters have a weak correlation. If two of the clusters include database objects which were indicated to be relevant to the search session, the correlation matrix is updated to indicate that the two clusters have a strong correlation. To avoid an excessive proliferation of database clusters, mergers are performed on clusters which are closely located within the feature space and share a strong correlation within the correlation matrix. Following continued use, the groupings of objects into clusters and the cluster-to-cluster correlations will reflect user-perceived relationships.

Claims 19-20 and 23-25 depend from independent Claim 1. Claim 1 is recited hereinabove.

None of Thompson, Squyres, Huang or Ma, considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest a method as recited in Claim 1. More specifically, Ma does not describe or suggest a method for providing a value of a good to a requester as recited in amended Claim 1. Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 1 is patentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Ma.

When the recitations of Claims 19-20 and 23-25 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 19-20 and 23-25 are also patentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Ma.

Claims 54-56 and 62-63 depend from independent Claim 34. Claim 34 is recited hereinabove.

None of Thompson, Squyres, Huang or Ma, considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest a system as recited in Claim 34. More specifically, Ma does not describe or suggest a system for providing a value of a good to a requester as recited in amended Claim 34. Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 34 is patentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Ma.

When the recitations of Claims 54-56 and 62-63 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 34, Applicants submit that Claims 54-56 and 62-63 are also patentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Ma.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection of Claims 19-20, 23-25, 54-56 and 62-63 be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claim 37 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Gell (U.S. Patent No. 6,577,858) is respectfully traversed.

Thompson, Squyres and Huang are all described above. Gell describes a communication system that includes a communication utilizing apparatus connectable to a communications network and service provision apparatus for making services available to the communications utilizing apparatus. An accounting device is associated with the communications utilizing apparatus and includes a digital data storage device, a signalling circuit, and a comparison device. The digital data storage device is arranged to store details of the receipt of services by the communications utilizing apparatus. The signalling circuit is arranged to receive, via the communications network, signals indicating a payment due in respect of services provided by the

service provision apparatus. The comparison device is arranged to compare the received indications with data derived from the stored details.

Claim 37 depends from independent Claim 34. Claim 34 is recited hereinabove.

None of Thompson, Squyres, Huang or Gell, considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest a system as recited in Claim 34. More specifically, Gell does not describe or suggest a system for providing a value of a good to a requester as recited in amended Claim 34. Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 34 is patentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Gell.

When the recitations of Claim 37 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 34, Applicants submit that Claim 37 is also patentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Gell.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection of Claim 37 be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claims 8 and 43 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Burke et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,789,252) ("Burke") is respectfully traversed.

Thompson, Squyres and Huang are all described above. Burke describes a method and system for providing an open and extensible object definition framework that manages business object definitions as specifications. This framework may be used to dynamically define any object that is to be processed by a computer. Objects can include Properties, Classifications, Knowledge, Business Objects, and Business Rules to name a few. Some examples of typical Business Objects include: business and social entities; locations, including spaces, places and channels; activities, including events and processes; items, including products and services; and business records, including orders and other forms of demand, inventory, jobs, deliverables, statements, transaction history et. al. The method and system may be used to define any object that is to be processed by a computer.

Claim 8 depends from independent Claim 1. Claim 1 is recited hereinabove.

None of Thompson, Squyres, Huang or Burke, considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest a method as recited in Claim 1. More specifically, Burke does not describe or suggest a method for providing a value of a good to a requester as recited in amended Claim 1. Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 1 is patentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Burke.

When the recitations of Claim 8 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Applicants submit that dependent Claim 8 is also patentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Burke.

Claim 43 depends from independent Claim 34. Claim 34 is recited hereinabove.

None of Thompson, Squyres, Huang or Burke, considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest a system as recited in Claim 34. More specifically, Burke does not describe or suggest a system for providing a value of a good to a requester as recited in amended Claim 34. Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 34 is patentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Burke.

When the recitations of Claim 43 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 34, Applicants submit that Claim 43 is also patentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Burke.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection of Claims 8 and 43 be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claims 10 and 46 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Colley et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,325,120) ("Colley") is respectfully traversed.

Thompson, Squyres and Huang are all described above. Colley describes a data processor architecture wherein the processors recognize two basic types of objects, an object

being a representation of related information maintained in a contiguously-addressed set of memory locations. The first type of object contains ordinary data, such as characters, integers, reals, etc. The second type of object contains a list of access descriptors. Each access descriptor provides information for locating and defining the extent of access to an object associated with that access descriptor. The processors recognize complex objects that are combinations of objects of the basic types. One such complex object (a context) defines an environment for execution of objects accessible to a given instance of a procedural operation. The dispatching of tasks to the processors is accomplished by hardware-controlled queuing mechanisms (dispatching-port objects) which allow multiple sets of processors to serve multiple, but independent sets of tasks. Communication between asynchronous tasks or processes is accomplished by related hardware-controlled queuing mechanisms (buffered-port objects) which allow messages to move between internal processes or input/output processes without the need for interrupts. A mechanism is provided which allows the processors to communicate with each other. This mechanism is used to reawaken an idle processor to alert the processor to the fact that a ready-to-run process at a dispatching port needs execution.

Claim 10 depends from independent Claim 1. Claim 1 is recited hereinabove.

None of Thompson, Squyres, Huang or Colley, considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest a method as recited in Claim 1. More specifically, Colley does not describe or suggest a method for providing a value of a good to a requester as recited in amended Claim 1. Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 1 is patentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Colley.

When the recitations of Claim 10 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Applicants submit that dependent Claim 10 is also patentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Colley.

Claim 46 depends from independent Claim 34. Claim 34 is recited hereinabove.

None of Thompson, Squyres, Huang or Colley, considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest a system as recited in Claim 34. More specifically, Colley does not describe

or suggest a system for providing a value of a good to a requester as recited in amended Claim 34. Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 34 is patentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Colley.

When the recitations of Claim 43 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 34, Applicants submit that Claim 43 is also patentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Colley.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection of Claims 10 and 46 be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claim 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thompson, Squyres, Huang and Colley and further in view of Cohen et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,178,430) ("Cohen") is respectfully traversed.

Thompson, Squyres, Huang, and Colley are all described above. Cohen describes an automated information technology standards management system for managing information standards that specify the procedures by which data is stored, manipulated, and retrieved within a computer system. The automated information technology standards management system manages information technology standards contained within a standards document stored on a permanent storage device. A download program converts the standards document into a displayable standards document that may be displayed on users' computers, and a dissemination process transmits the displayable standards document to users' computers for display. The automated information technology standards management system provides management services to users, including services for proposing changes to the information technology standards, for requesting changes to the information technology standards, scheduling on-line conferences for users to discuss proposed changes and requested exceptions to the information technology standards, and for voting on proposed changes and requested exceptions to the information technology standards.

Claim 11 depends from independent Claim 1. Claim 1 is recited hereinabove.

None of Thompson, Squyres, Huang, Colley, or Cohen, considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest a method as recited in Claim 1. More specifically, Cohen does not describe or suggest a method for providing a value of a good to a requester as recited in amended Claim 1. Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 1 is patentable over Thompson, Squyres Huang, and Colley in view of Cohen.

When the recitations of Claim 11 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Applicants submit that dependent Claim 11 is also patentable over Thompson, Squyres, Huang and Colley in view of Cohen.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection of Claim 11 be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claim 45 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Cohen is respectfully traversed.

Thompson, Squyres, Huang, and Cohen are all described above.

Claim 45 depends from independent Claim 34. Claim 34 is recited hereinabove.

None of Thompson, Squyres, Huang or Cohen, considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest a system as recited in Claim 34. More specifically, Cohen does not describe or suggest a system for providing a value of a good to a requester as recited in amended Claim 34. Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 34 is patentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Cohen.

When the recitations of Claim 45 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 34, Applicants submit that dependent Claim 45 is also patentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Cohen.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection of Claim 45 be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claims 29 and 53 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Ecklund (U.S. Patent No. 4,853,843) is respectfully traversed.

Thompson, Squyres and Huang are all described above. Ecklund describes an object-oriented, distributed data base system that separates into a plurality of virtual partitions following communication failure between sites accessing the data base. Each partition accesses a separate copy of an initial data base and independently updates groups of data objects included in the data base to add new versions of data objects to the data base. Each virtual partition maintains a copy of all previous versions of data objects and maintains a change list describing all group updates that it executes. Following restoration of communication between sites, each virtual partition merges the data bases maintained by separate partitions to form a consistent merged data base permitting versions of data objects and collections of data objects created by any one of the separate virtual partitions to be identified and accessed in the merged data base.

Claim 29 depends from independent Claim 1. Claim 1 is recited hereinabove.

None of Thompson, Squyres, Huang or Ecklund, considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest a method as recited in Claim 1. More specifically, Ecklund does not describe or suggest a method for providing a value of a good to a requester as recited in amended Claim 1. Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 1 is patentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Ecklund.

When the recitations of Claim 29 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Applicants submit that dependent Claim 29 is also patentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Ecklund.

Claim 53 depends from independent Claim 34. Claim 34 is recited hereinabove.

None of Thompson, Squyres, Huang or Ecklund, considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest a system as recited in Claim 34. More specifically, Ecklund does not describe or suggest a system for providing a value of a good to a requester as recited in amended

Claim 34. Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 34 is patentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Ecklund.

When the recitations of Claim 53 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 34, Applicants submit that Claim 53 is also patentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Ecklund.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection of Claims 29 and 53 be withdrawn.

In addition to the argument set forth above, Applicants further traverse the rejection of Claims 5, 16, 26-28, 38, 50-52 and 57 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Whitworth; the rejection of Claims 17, 30-32 and 58-60 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Quinn; the rejection of Claims 18 and 61 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Hartnett; the rejection of Claims 19-20, 23-25, 54-56 and 62-63 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Ma; the rejection of Claim 37 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Gell; the rejection of Claims 8 and 43 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Burke; the rejection of Claims 10 and 46 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Colley; the rejection of Claim 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang and Colley and further in view of Cohen; the rejection of Claim 45 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Cohen; and the rejection of Claims 29 and 53 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thompson, Squyres and Huang in view of Ecklund on the grounds that these Section 103 rejections are improper rejections.

Obviousness cannot be established by merely suggesting that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify Thompson, Squyres and Huang using the teachings of Whitworth, Quinn, Hartnett, Ma, Gell, Burke, Colley, Cohen or Ecklund. More specifically, as is well established, obviousness cannot be established by combining the teachings of the cited art

to produce the claimed invention, absent some teaching, suggestion, or incentive supporting the combination. None of the cited references, alone or in combination, describe or suggest the claimed combination. Furthermore, in contrast to the assertion within the Office Action, Applicants respectfully submit that it would not be obvious to one skilled in the art to combine the cited references because there is no motivation to combine the references suggested in the art. Rather, the Examiner has not pointed to any prior art that teaches or suggests to combine the disclosures, other than Applicants' own teaching.

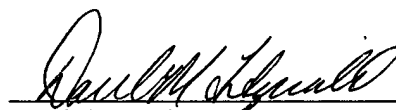
As the Federal Circuit has recognized, obviousness is not established merely by combining references having different individual elements of pending claims. Ex parte Levengood, 28 U.S.P.Q.2d 1300 (Bd. Pat. App. & Inter. 1993). MPEP 2143.01. Rather, there must be some suggestion, outside of Applicants' disclosure, in the prior art to combine such references, and a reasonable expectation of success must be both found in the prior art, and not based on Applicants' disclosure. In re Vaeck, 20 U.S.P.Q.2d 1436 (Fed. Cir. 1991). In the present case, neither a suggestion or motivation to combine the prior art disclosures, nor any reasonable expectation of success has been shown.

Furthermore, it is impermissible to use the claimed invention as an instruction manual or "template" to piece together the teachings of the cited art so that the claimed invention is rendered obvious. Specifically, one cannot use hindsight reconstruction to pick and choose among isolated disclosures in the art to deprecate the claimed invention. Further, it is impermissible to pick and choose from any one reference only so much of it as will support a given position, to the exclusion of other parts necessary to the full appreciation of what such reference fairly suggests to one of ordinary skill in the art. The present Section 103 rejection is based on a combination of teachings selected from multiple patents in an attempt to arrive at the claimed invention. Since there is no teaching nor suggestion in the cited art for the claimed combination, the Section 103 rejection appears to be based on a hindsight reconstruction in which isolated disclosures have been picked and chosen in an attempt to deprecate the present invention. Of course, such a combination is impermissible, and for this reason alone, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 103 rejection be withdrawn.

For at least the reasons set for above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 103 rejection of Claims 5, 16, 26-28, 38, 50-52 and 57; the rejection of Claims 17, 30-32 and 58-60; the rejection of Claims 18 and 61; the rejection of Claims 19-20, 23-25, 54-56 and 62-63; the rejection of Claim 37; the rejection of Claims 8 and 43; the rejection of Claims 10 and 46; the rejection of Claim 11; the rejection of Claim 45; and the rejection of Claims 29 and 53 be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, all the claims now active in this application are believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and favorable action is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,



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